

#12

State Board of Education
100 River View Plaza
Trenton, NJ

I think the proposal to change the language in Code could be likened to a sub or a part time teacher in a classroom. These professionals hold a teaching degree and are qualified to teach, but they do not know the children. They do not know each individual child and how best to serve that child that day. They do not have that window to enter the child's whole world including home and school friends, nor do they understand why that child would not be available to learn that particular day in the classroom. Plus of course, a substitute makes less than a \$100 for their day's work.

So it could be perceived then, that some school districts could hire a bunch of part time teachers. It's cheaper. Beware then, that cohesiveness, and continuity, and connection to school family would be greatly impacted.

So it is the same with RN's and Certified School Nurses. I contribute to the health and well being of the children in my school. Please refer to my original letter so time is used efficiently. See attached.

I am a RN. Please understand, a school nurse has been further educated, thereby certifying she has specialized in the field; such as an OR nurse can be certified in OR nursing along with all the specialties in the hospital.

An RN is licensed by the state, but nursing has so many fields with new ones coming all the time, like forensic nursing. This was not available to me as a student long ago.

All RN's render good care

Just like the hospital. you have your General practitioner's, good doctors, but then you have your specialists, same with nursing. And school nursing is no different. We are RN'S; with advanced education and are an integral part of the educational process.

There are many instances where my expertise and skill have helped to better serve a child. I will only point out two.

A 7 y.o. second grader in my school recently underwent emergency hip surgery.

Doctors orders said, no gym, for the rest of this year plus next year. This is a young, active spirited boy, who would be so sad having to sit out his gym classes while his friends continued to play and have fun.

A part time RN would know to follow Doctors orders. However, since I am a nurse educator, I know about 504's, health care plans, and medical classification. So I met with the CST to plan a 504 for this child for next year. We were able to schedule this child with our special adaptive Phy Ed. teacher. Now this child can meet the requirements of the state for Phys. Ed, plus maintain a level of fitness that would not impact his R hip. The parents were very appreciative. A less than full time nurse would not know how or about this.

Another example, using a medical classification. 3 yrs ago, we had a 3 gr. student transfer into our school from Michigan. He had Type 2 diabetes. (not due to obesity) Diabetic children need to have their blood sugar tested frequently during the day. The parents wished their child to miss as little time as possible in the classroom. I scheduled a meeting with parents and the classroom teacher and was able to have the child do his own glucose testing in the classroom. We worked out a health care plan. We had a buddy system, and I taught all his classmates about low blood sugar and its symptoms. That was a special year for everyone and the child and family felt very much a part of our school family. A lot of education on my part enabled this child to remain in the class and not miss valuable class time.

I could go on. The point is, a certified school nurse knows the educational process. It's our job to help all children get a thorough education. We are the only nurses who are specialized in the area. We know how to keep kids in school, and we know how to best provide them service.

I invite you to my school Littlebrook, in Princeton Regional Schools, in the future to one of my brown bag lunches for parents in which I speak about family issues and conflicts and provide resources for necessary care.

I invite you to my school this January 8 through the 12 where we will have a Wellness Week, which I am chairing. The entire school family will be a part of this educative and fun event.

All nurses serve, but every child deserves a certified school nurse

Respectfully,
Connie Turpin RN CST Ed M
Littlebrook Elementary School
Princeton NJ

April 26, 2006

Dear Members of the State Board of Education,

It is vital that New Jersey students have highly qualified, full-time Certified School Nurses in our schools. I am writing this letter regarding NJAC 6A:16.2. I understand that you are considering removing the words "full-time equivalent" and its definition. I urge you to please leave this wording in the amendment.

I am the only medical personnel in my building. As a school nurse, I attend to the medical needs of the students under my care, and the staff as well. Education of staff and parents and students is a big part of my job, and medical matters constitute a very large and important part of my responsibilities.

Administering medications ordered by a physician, writing care plans, and treating students in an emergency, such as an Asthma attack, conferring with physicians and Child Study Team members, and monitoring immunization compliance, screening students annually, and arranging for nurses to go on field trips with our medically needy students, are just a few of the things I do to keep our students healthy and safe and ready to learn.

Some students do not have a regular physician so I make sure they are referred to the appropriate agency to receive the care they need. Some children have never been to a dentist. I help arrange for dental care. Assisting and encouraging families to complete the N J Family Care paper work is necessary for some families in which I help.

With my background in education, as well as nursing, which is required of a Certified School Nurse, I have been instrumental in fulfilling the mandates of the state requiring drug education and AIDS/HIV education. I also served on the district's wellness committee to get in place a Wellness Policy for implementation September of '06. I initiate many activities in my school, which promote wellness and making good choices. This covers the span of character education to simply knowing good healthy choices. Student progress and assessment is another big part of my responsibility as school nurse. Assessment and collection of data help staff understand the whole child and monitor progress.

I attend many conferences and workshops to stay abreast of the changes within my field. This year I co-chaired NJ Second Annual State School Nurse Conference. We based the whole conference on the needs of school nurses and found professionals who were experts in their fields to teach us. My professional development far exceeds the 20 hours mandated per year. I average 50 hours a year. My students and staff deserve a well informed certified school nurse.

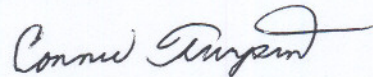
I urge you to leave the language "full-time equivalent" in the proposed NJAC 6A:16.2. We have worked very hard to achieve the level of care we give our students in

New Jersey. Further, I do not want the care we give to our school family community compromised in any way.

The New Jersey State School Nurse Association maintains a list of certified school nurses looking for jobs. 345 certificates were issued last year. With this pool of nurses, it seems that there should be an adequate number of Certified School Nurses available for positions. We are highly qualified individuals and have education beyond a Bachelor's degree.

Your consideration of these points when making your decision, would be greatly appreciated. All children deserve a certified school nurse.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Connie L. Turpin".

Connie L. Turpin RN Ed.M

School Nurse of Littlebrook
Elementary, in Princeton.

Education chair of NJSSNA